

# Worksession

<b>Agenda Item #</b>	5
<b>Meeting Date</b>	April 21, 2008
<b>Prepared By</b>	Suzanne Ludlow, Deputy City Manager
<b>Approved By</b>	Barbara B. Matthews, City Manager

<b>Discussion Item</b>	Discussion of Draft Resolution Regarding the Takoma Metro Development
<b>Background</b>	<p>The City Council has approved seven resolutions taking positions on the proposed redevelopment of the Takoma Metro station site. The major point of the resolutions was to protect transit access for the Takoma Park community at the station.</p> <p>When the WMATA Board voted to approve the sale and development of the site at its November 8, 2007 meeting, the point of decision-making regarding the development moved to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the District of Columbia government, both of which must approve the proposal. The City Council wished to hear from the community about what position the City Council should take at this point regarding the proposal. A community workshop was held on March 19 and information and a questionnaire were prepared by staff and a consultant to help gather input. Over 60 people attended the workshop and over 300 people responded with comments on the questionnaire. All Councilmembers attended the workshop and have received the responses to the questionnaire.</p> <p>Though neither the attendees of the workshop nor the responders to the survey were statistically representative of the Takoma Park community as a whole, the comments were thoughtful and at times extensive. A large number of commenters urged the City to continue to focus on transit access as an issue, and to also take a position on other aspects of the proposed development as well. A large number of persons urged the City to consider legal steps to either prevent any development at the station or to ensure that City goals are met at the site. Many who supported taking legal action conditioned their support on ensuring that there would be a good chance of legal success within a reasonable cost.</p> <p>A draft resolution was prepared by staff that begins to address a number of the issues raised by residents. The list of issues is not a recommendation by staff of the position the Council should take, but rather a starting point from which to choose, add, and modify. Please note that it is more useful to have just a few major points on which to focus, so reducing the list or identifying top priorities is recommended.</p>
<b>Policy</b>	The City Council is concerned with the accessibility of transit for Takoma Park's residents, employees and visitors. The City Council is concerned with development that may affect the Takoma Park community.
<b>Fiscal Impact</b>	n/a
<b>Attachments</b>	Draft Resolution.
<b>Recommendation</b>	Discuss the position the Council would like to take regarding the Takoma Metro development, so that a draft resolution may be revised to express that position, for

	consideration at the Council Meeting of April 28.
<b>Special Consideration</b>	

Introduced By:

***DRAFT***

**RESOLUTION #2008-xx**

**Resolution Establishing the Policy of the City of Takoma Park  
Regarding Development at the Takoma Metro Station**

- WHEREAS,** in 1999, a joint development proposal for the land at the Takoma Metro station in Washington, D.C., on the City of Takoma Park, Maryland border, was submitted to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA); and
- WHEREAS,** concern over the impacts that the sale of land at the station would have on the Takoma Park community has been expressed in City Council Resolutions 2001-11, 2002-27, 2002-30, 2005-59, 2006-58, 2006-59, 2007-41 and 2008-xx, and resulted in the joint funding of the Takoma Transportation Study with the District of Columbia Department of Transportation, in the hiring of the transportation consultant firm Nelson\Nygaard, and in the devotion of extensive staff and legal resources to efforts to protect transit access for the Takoma Park community; and
- WHEREAS,** Takoma Park, Maryland is a transit oriented community where 25 percent of the workforce commutes by public transit and another 18 percent carpools, walks or bikes to work; a community served by 18 Ride On and Metrobus routes, ten of which use the Takoma Station; a community which parks in the short-term-parking-only Takoma Station parking lot to take the Metro to run errands, attend meetings, and attend cultural and sporting events, and shop; and
- WHEREAS,** the Takoma Metro station is a major gateway to Takoma Park, Maryland; is a key feature of the Old Town Business District, shared with the Takoma neighborhood of Washington, D.C.; and faces 12 Takoma Park, Maryland homes; and
- WHEREAS,** on November 8, 2007, the WMATA Board of Directors approved the sale of land at the Takoma Metro station to development firm EYA for a townhouse development project; and
- WHEREAS,** before the project may proceed, the sale of the land must be approved by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) because the federal government granted the land to WMATA for the Metrorail system, and the townhouse and site development plan must be approved by the District of Columbia; and
- WHEREAS,** consistent with its past position, the Takoma Park City Council adopted Resolution 2008-xx, urging the Federal Transit Administration to deny the sale of the land so as to ensure protection of the public transit facilities at the Takoma Metro station now and for the future; and

**WHEREAS,** in addition to that action, the Takoma Park City Council also wishes to establish its position regarding other issues concerning the proposed development at the Takoma Metro station; and

**WHEREAS,** in order to ensure substantial opportunity for public comment on the Council's position, the City Council hosted a community workshop on March 19, 2008 attended by more than 60 people and staff made a survey available in the Takoma Park *Newsletter* and on the City's website which was completed by more than 300 people; and

**WHEREAS,** while many views were expressed, issues of greatest concern are:

- preservation of transit access, especially handicapped access and parking
- environmental issues
- preservation of the green space
- traffic
- public safety
- development design, especially related to the density of development

and

**WHEREAS,** the residents of Takoma Park are heavily dependent upon the Takoma Metro station as a terminus for ten Ride On and Metrobus routes and both the Regional Bus Study and the Takoma Transportation Study call for 12 bus bays at the station, up from the current nine, to handle expected increases in ridership; and

**WHEREAS,** the Takoma Metro station is a station within a regional transit system and, although located within the borders of Washington, D.C., must continue to provide adequate capacity to serve both its Maryland and Washington, D.C. patrons; and

**WHEREAS,** the City of Takoma Park strongly supports and respects the home rule rights of the District of Columbia in regulating development within the District of Columbia.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND THAT** the Council opposes the reconfiguration of the Takoma Metro station site in any way which reduces, rather than enhances, Takoma Park's transit options and opportunities; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** the Council directs staff and legal counsel to work to ensure that transit access not be reduced at the station and that it remain of sufficient capacity to meet the Takoma/Takoma Park community transit need now and in the future; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** the City Council directs staff to work with the developer, the District of Columbia Office of Planning, other area officials and the community to

encourage a proposal that advances the interests of Takoma Park in the following areas:

1. Given the densely developed surroundings of the Takoma Metro property and the role of the property as a community center and gateway, work to ensure that the Takoma Metro property provides a healthful environment and respite for the surrounding community, with trees, green space, and attractive landscaping and vegetation.
2. Given the need for addressing global warming and other aspects of environmental degradation, work to ensure that any construction involve building materials and practices that reduce or at least minimize negative impacts on the environment.
3. Given that the transportation network around the Takoma Metro property consists of small neighborhood streets, the Metropolitan Branch Trail, and sidewalks, work to ensure that development plans for the property minimize traffic congestion in the surrounding area and that pedestrian and bicyclist safety be protected and enhanced.
4. Given that the Takoma Metro has a large percentage of residents who access the station by walking and given that attacks on persons walking to and from the station do occur, work to ensure that sight lines, lighting, and other site features discourage unlawful activity.
5. Given that the Takoma Metro property is located in the Takoma Park Historic District of Washington, D.C. and is adjacent to the Takoma Park Historic District of Montgomery County, work to ensure that the site and building designs meet the standards of those districts.
6. Given that the Takoma Metro site and surrounding area were studied and addressed in the District of Columbia Takoma Central District Plan, which is a part of the D.C. Comprehensive Plan, work to ensure that the provisions of the plan are incorporated into the final design of the property.
7. Given that the Takoma Metro property faces single family homes across Eastern Avenue in Takoma Park, Maryland, work to ensure that the massing, siting and orientation of buildings and site features respects and complements those properties.
8. Given the interest in minimization of impervious surfaces and protection of existing trees on the Takoma Metro property, work to ensure that new construction is located on existing impervious surfaces on the site, recognizing that such construction may be of greater density or height than is currently proposed.
9. Given the interest in supporting the economic sustainability of the Old Town Business District, work to ensure that the March 22, 2007 position of the Old Takoma Business Association Board of Directors be addressed in the site design, including continuity of the commercial corridor, increased parking, increased access to public transportation, and preservation of the existing green space.